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ABSTRACT

First in a series, this booklet contains suggestions for planning literacy in Year 6. This Year 6 plan for 2001-2002 and the short-term unit plan for narrative writing are a distillation of the work of a representative group of Year 6 teachers. It contains the Year 6 Term 1 Units 2 and 5 on Narrative Writing. It begins with an outline of the basic principles underpinning medium-term planning in literacy, then it presents a chart for termly planning, target statements for the units, an overview of the units, short-term planning, and resources for each day. It then presents a detailed lesson plan for units 2 and 5. (RS)

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The National **Literacy** *Strategy*

Year 6

Planning Exemplification

Guidance

Curriculum & Standards

Year 6 Teachers

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Year 6 Planning Exemplification

Introduction

This booklet contains suggestions for planning literacy in Year 6. Many teachers are now very familiar with the NLS Framework objectives for Year 6 and also experienced in preparing children for the end of Key Stage 2 tests. These teachers prepare children for the tests through units of work which teach the Framework objectives, so ensuring that the children attain level 4, 5 or higher while broadening their literacy experience. This Year 6 plan for 2001-2002 and the short-term unit plan for narrative writing are a distillation of the work of a representative group of these teachers. This material reflects *Grammar for Writing*, Key Stage 2 *Spelling bank*, the Year 6 revision guidance and booster lessons, and the approaches recommended in the writing fliers and related web material.

Medium plan

This plan for teaching literacy:

- includes all Year 6 objectives;
- assembles the text, sentence and word level objectives into coherent units, most lasting a fortnight;
- allows for positioning of units in the term's timetable to accommodate related work in other curriculum areas;
- repeats some objectives where appropriate;
- indicates pupil outcomes for each unit of work (at level 4 or above);
- provides the framework for in-depth teaching which stimulates children's interest in reading and writing;
- gives extensive instruction and practice in writing in the genres which typically occur in the Key Stage 2 test;
- assumes teachers will be reading a novel to the class on a regular basis outside the Literacy Hour throughout the term;
- assumes that children will be expected to read and write outside the Literacy Hour including at home.

Further Year 6 resources – Year 6 booster units, Revision guidance, Quality texts, Teaching sequences, can be found on www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/literacy

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Termly planning

Year 6 Term 1 – Autumn Term 2001				
Unit	**Weeks**	**Objectives**	**Text**	**Outcome**
1. Poetry	2	Text: 3, 4, 5, 10 Sentence: 1 Word: 1-3, 7	Work of two poets	2 poems, 1 presentation
2. Narrative writing	2	Text: 7 Sentence: 1 Word: 1-4	Class novel + extracts	1 narrative
3. Media/plays	2	Text: 1, 2, 6, 9 Sentence: 6 Word: 1-3, 9	Class novel + video version	1 narrative 1 scene
4. Journalistic	2	Text: 8, 12, 15, 16, 18 Sentence: 1, 4 Word: 6, 8	Curriculum subject/current events	Newspaper articles
5. Narrative writing	3	Text: 7 Sentence: 1, 4, 5 Word: 1, 2, 3, 6	Class novel and extracts	2 narratives
6. Biography/ autobiography	2	Text: 3, 4, 5, 11, 14 Sentence: 5 Word: 1-3, 10	Biography/ autobiography	Biographical/ autobiographical writing
7. Reports	2	Text: 13, 17 Sentence: 2, 3 Word: 1-4	Curriculum subject	Report

Notes:
- Units 2 and 5 on narrative writing could be placed together in a five-week block.
- Units 4, 6 and 7 link to other areas of the curriculum.

Year 6 Term 2 – Spring Term 2002				
Unit	**Weeks**	**Objectives**	**Text**	**Outcome**
1. Poetry	1	Text: 3, 4, 5, 6, 9	Range of forms	Interpretation of poems
2. Narrative writing	2	Text: 1, (7), 11, (13) Sentence: 3 Word: 1, 2, 3, 6	Class novel + extracts	1 narrative
3. Argument	2	Text: 15, 16, 18, 19 Sentence: 5 Word: 8	Balanced reports	Debate 1 persuasive and 1 discursive text
4. Narrative writing	3	Text: 2, 8, 9, 10, (12), 14 Sentence: 3 Word: 1, 2, 3, 7	Class novel + extracts	2 narratives
5. Formal	2	Text: 17, 20 Sentence: 1, 2, 4 Word: 4, 5	Examples of 'formal' writing and presentation	1 'official' document

Notes:
- Units 2 and 4 on narrative writing could be placed together in a five-week block.
- Units 3 and 5 link to other areas of the curriculum.
- As this is such a short term, objectives in brackets could be moved to the Summer Term.

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Year 6 Term 3 – Summer Term, April and early May 2002 REVISION UNITS				
Unit	**Weeks**	**Objectives**	**Text**	**Outcome**
1. Poetry	1	Text: 4	3 poems	Practice in reading poetry
2. Reading and writing narrative	2	Text: 7, 18, 21 Sentence: 3 Word: 1, 2, 3	Class novel + extracts One play	Practice in reading and writing narrative and plays
3. Non-fiction	2	Text: 15, 19, 22 Sentence: 1 Word: 1, 2, 3	Extracts from non-fiction texts	Practice in reading and writing non-fiction

Year 6 Term 3 – Summer Term, May to July 2002				
Unit	**Weeks**	**Objectives**	**Text**	**Outcome**
1. Poetry	1	Text: 2, 3, 13 Word: 5, 6, 7	Work by significant poets	Sequence of poems
2. Authors and texts	2	Text: 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12 (Term 2 Text: 7, 13) Sentence: 2, 4 Word: 5, 6	Class novel Work by significant authors (same theme) Parody	Reading journal Parody writing
3. Extended narrative	3	Text: 10, 11, 14 (Term 2 Text: 12) Sentence: 4 Word: 1, 2, 3	Class novel + extracts	Extended narrative
4. Impersonal writing	2	Text: 16, 17, 20 Sentence: 3 Word: 4	Explanations, reports, reference texts	Formal report

Note:
- Unit 4 links to other areas of the curriculum.

Year 6 Term 1
Units 2 and 5
Narrative writing

Year 6 Target statements for writing applicable to narrative writing

SPELLING

- Use independent spelling strategies, including:
  - building up spellings by syllabic parts, using known prefixes, suffixes and common letter strings;
  - applying knowledge of spelling rules and exceptions;
  - building words from other known words, and from awareness of the meaning or derivation of words;
  - using dictionaries and IT spell-checks;
  - using visual skills, e.g. recognising common letter strings and checking critical features.

STYLE: LANGUAGE EFFECTS

- Use well-chosen phrases such as adverbials, adventurous and precise vocabulary and other techniques such as sentence variation or figurative language, to contribute to the effectiveness of writing.

STYLE: SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION AND PUNCTUATION

- Secure control of complex sentences, understanding how clauses can be manipulated to achieve different effects.
- Write sentences in an appropriate and effective style, in relation to text type, audience and purpose.
- Demarcate most sentences correctly with Year 5 range of punctuation marks. Secure the use of the comma to demarcate grammatical boundaries and to separate elements of a sentence, such as short phrases, clauses or items in a list.

PURPOSE AND ORGANISATION

- Use pronouns and tenses accurately to establish textual cohesion and to avoid ambiguity.
- Write with appropriate pace.
- In narrative, create characters with some significant interaction between them, through direct or reported speech, building characterisation through action, description, and characters' responses.
- Use paragraphs to distinguish the structure of different texts.
- Relate events logically so that writing is coherent and provides good coverage of the main topic.
- Use the range of different types of connectives to write coherently.

PROCESS

- Plan quickly and effectively, including the conclusion.
- Discuss and select appropriate style and form to suit specific purpose and audience, drawing on knowledge of different texts.

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Overview of Units 2 and 5: Narrative writing

Week	Text and sentence level focus	Shared writing focus	Outcome
Unit 2 2 weeks	Varying sentences for impact: long, short, questions, exclamations, complex sentences for layers of meaning, etc.	**Demonstration:** teacher demonstrates complete narrative built up over the fortnight in five chunks: 1. opening/setting 2. build-up 3. dilemma 4. reaction/events 5. resolution/ending	Children write complete story built up over the fortnight using planning frame (see page 8).
Unit 5 2 weeks	Using paragraphing to structure a narrative; connecting words and phrases within and between paragraphs.	**Teacher as scribe:** teacher scribes for children as they compose complete narrative built up over the fortnight in five chunks: 1. opening/setting 2. build-up 3. dilemma 4. reaction/events 5. resolution/ending	Children write complete narrative built up over the fortnight with less scaffolding (see page 23).
Unit 5 1 week	Varying order of words within sentences for impact; using stylistic devices, e.g. simile, alliteration, personification.	**Supported composition:** in pairs, children compose complete narrative built up over the week in five chunks: 1. opening/setting 2. build-up 3. dilemma 4. reaction/events 5. resolution/ending	Children, independently, write complete narrative built up over the week, with scaffolding for only few children in need (see page 24).

Short-term planning for Units 2 and 5: Narrative writing

Unit 2 is a two-week unit. Unit 5 consists of a two-week unit and a one-week unit. The pattern for both these two-week units is the same; within each two-week unit are five two-day sequences.

Week 1					Week 2				
1		2		3		4		5	
Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri
reading	writing	reading	writing	reading	writing	reading	writing	reading	writing

The first day is effectively a reading and text analysis lesson; the second day is a writing lesson.

Day	Whole-class text and sentence level work	Independent/guided work (class and home)	Plenary
1	Shared reading: analyse and annotate 2 examples/create checklist.	Analyse one or two other examples against checklist; add to checklist if necessary.	Summarise features of effective writing.
2	Shared writing using checklist.	Write individually using checklist.	Evaluation of children's writing.

Over the two weeks a complete narrative is *analysed* so that the children can see what features make up each section of a story and a complete narrative is *written* by the teacher in shared writing and another by the children in independent writing. The subject matter of each two-day sequence is as follows:

Days	
1/2	Opening/setting scene or introducing characters
3/4	Build-up/characterisation or setting
5/6	Dilemma
7/8	Reaction/events
9/10	Resolution/ending

During the final week of Unit 5, another story is started and taken to completion within the week (see page 24).

Objectives

Text

7. to plan quickly and effectively the plot, characters and structure of their own narrative writing;

Sentence

1. to revise from Year 5:
   - re-expressing sentences in a different order;
5. to form complex sentences through, e.g.:
   - using different connecting devices;
   - reading back complex sentences for clarity of meaning, and adjusting as necessary;
   - evaluating which links work best;
   - exploring how meaning is affected by the sequences and structure of clauses.

Word

1. to identify mis-spelt words in own writing; to keep individual lists (e.g. spelling logs); to learn to spell them;
2. to use known spellings as a basis for spelling other words with similar patterns or related meanings;
3. to use independent spelling strategies, including:
   - building up spelling by syllabic parts, using known prefixes, suffixes and common letter strings;
   - applying knowledge of spelling rules and exceptions;
   - building words from other known words, and from awareness of the meaning or derivations of words;
   - using dictionaries and IT spell-checks;
   - using visual skills, e.g. recognising common letter strings and checking critical features (i.e. does it look right, shape, length, etc.);
4. revise and extend work on spelling patterns for unstressed vowels in polysyllabic words from Year 5 Term 3.

Outcome

Suspense story

Typical planning frame for a suspense story

Opening Introduces characters; gets story going	**Build-up** Establishes setting; characters start to do something – all appears to be going well	**Dilemma** Suspense section – something starts to happen	**Events** Options: • they run, and possibly get chased • they investigate and get close	**Resolution and ending** Options: • nothing after all • chasing/fighting off something • finding something unexpected

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Unit 2: Narrative writing RESOURCES

Checklists for effective narrative writing

1 Opening/introducing characters
2 Build-up/characterisation or setting
3 Dilemma
4 Reaction/events
5 Resolution/ending

1. Opening/introducing characters

Some possible options for opening a story 'to grab the reader':

- using dialogue, e.g. a warning given by one character to another
- asking the reader a question
- describing some strange behaviour of one of the characters
- using a dramatic exclamation (Help!) or dramatic event
- introducing something intriguing

Techniques for introducing characters

- using an interesting name
- limiting description on how the character feels, e.g. sad, lonely, angry or what they are, e.g. bossy, shy
- relying on portraying character through action and dialogue
- using powerful verbs to show how a character feels and behaves, e.g. muttered, ambled
- giving the thoughts and reactions of other characters
- revealing the characters' own thoughts and ideas

2. Build-up/creating setting

- making the characters do something
- using detail based on sense impressions – what can be seen, heard, smelt, touched or tasted
- basing settings on known places plus some invented detail
- using real or invented names to bring places alive – to help to make the setting more real and more believable
- creating atmosphere, e.g. what is hidden, what is dangerous, what looks unusual, what is out of place
- using the weather, time of day and season, as well as place
- lulling the reader into a false sense of security that all is well

3. Dilemma

- introducing a problem
- using 'empty' words, e.g. 'someone' to create suspense
- using short sentences to be dramatic
- strengthening nouns and verbs rather than adjectives and adverbs
- employing suspense words such as 'suddenly', 'without warning'

- drawing the reader in by asking a question
- occasionally breaking the sentence rule by using a fragment to emphasise a point, e.g. 'Silence!'
- varying sentence openings by sometimes starting with an adverb, e.g. 'Carefully', a prepositional phrase, e.g. 'At the end of the street', a subordinate clause, e.g. 'Although she was tired, Vanya . . .' 'Swinging his stick in the air, he . . .'
- delaying the revealing of the 'monster' by shadows, sounds, etc.
- using ominous sounds, darkness or cold to build tension

4. Reaction/events

- building on many of the techniques already used in the earlier part of the story
- varying sentence structures by using longer sentences to get a rhythm going to describe the increasing tension as events unfold
- using alliteration and short sentences to portray sounds within the action
- using metaphor and simile to help paint the scene and describe the feelings of the characters
- introducing further possible complications, using connecting words and phrases such as 'unfortunately ...', 'what he hadn't noticed was ...'

5. Resolution and ending

Techniques for resolving the dilemma

- allowing help to arrive in an unexpected form, such as 'It was at that moment that ...'
- making the character(s) do something unexpected
- showing that the problem/dilemma was only in the characters' minds and not real
- allowing the character some extra effort to overcome the problem
- only resolving a part of the dilemma so the characters learn a lesson for the future

Some possible options for closing a story

- making a comment about the resolution
- using dialogue – a comment from one of the characters
- using a question
- making a mysterious remark
- telling the reader to remember or to do something
- showing how a character has changed
- using one word or an exclamation
- avoiding clichés such as 'The end' or 'They all lived happily ever after' unless it is a fabrication of a traditional story
- reflecting on the events and perhaps providing a moral
- allowing the main character to think aloud
- introducing an element of mystery, e.g. 'Vanya would never know how lucky she was that ...'
- looking to the future
- revisiting where the story began

Unit 2: Narrative writing RESOURCES

Text for shared writing: demonstration
(for use on Days 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, including points to bring out during the demonstration writing)

The Hand

Day 2

Opening – introducing the characters

Claire grinned at her twin sister, Sadie. It was almost the end of the last lesson of the day. Outside, the wind whipped leaves and crisp packets across the playground. A gaggle of mums and dads gathered at the school gate. Inside, the lesson drew to a close. Mrs Sondhi sent the class out one by one.

- *Short sentence for clarity – 'grinned' shows Claire is happy.*
- *Quickly introduces characters.*
- *Scene setting – slightly wild, end of day. Contrast of outside/inside.*
- *Realistic note.*
- *Spelling – double 'n' and 'p' in 'grinned' and 'whipped'. Non-stressed vowel in 'packet', 'ou' spelling for /ow/ phoneme, 'almost' one word (also, although, altogether etc.).*

The two girls rushed across the playground and up the High Street. They could hardly wait to get back home. Claire marched on, almost running, only stopping to tug up her ankle socks. Sadie laughed. "Don't waste time with that!" she shouted and dashed on. By the chip shop they turned up Filcher's alley, to take the short cut to the estate. "Oh no," Claire groaned, rummaging in her bag. "I've left it behind! I'll have to go back. Tell Mum I might be late. See you later!" she yelled down the dark alley. But there was no reply. Sadie had raced on.

- *'rushed', 'hardly wait', 'running', 'only stopping', 'don't waste time', 'dashed', 'raced' – showing they are in a hurry.*
- *Leaves reader wondering 'why'?*
- *Claire – pulling socks up – trying to keep up appearances, more sensible?*
- *Sadie – more impulsive, doesn't care much about what others think, impetuous?*
- *What has Claire left behind – makes reader want to read on.*
- *Dark alley – suspense note.*
- *Sentence starting with 'but' – to create drama.*

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RESOURCES

Day 4

Build-up

Panting hard, Claire raced back across the empty playground. The school was still open, so Mr Jakes, the caretaker, had to be somewhere. She paused and listened, but could not hear him. 'Now, where was it?' she asked herself as she searched through her tray.

- *Non-finite verb starter to show how puffed she is.*
- *'paused and listened' creating tension – what might she have heard?*
- *Question to draw reader into wondering.*
- *Spelling – 'searched', 'ear' representing the /ir/ phoneme.*

There it was! Claire picked up her new pen. Mum would not have been too pleased if that had been lost. She smiled to herself, thinking about her birthday party. It had only been a week ago. Fancy seeing Aunty Joan and Uncle Bill after all this time – all the way from Australia!

- *All is well – lulling reader into false sense of security.*

Day 6

Dilemma – the exciting bit!

A door banged. Claire jumped. What was that? It wasn't Mr Jakes because she could now hear him whistling at the other end of the playground. Out of the silence, she heard steps. Someone was coming closer. Somebody, or something, was coming down the corridor. Nearer. She stood still, so that even the tables and chairs froze with her. Carefully, she peered round the edge of the door. A shadow slipped, quick as a knife, into the next classroom. Claire clenched her fist around her pen, her heart racing fast.

- *Short sentences and question to create suspense.*
- *Use of 'empty' words – 'someone'.*
- *Frightening shift from someone to something.*
- *Repetition and use of sentence fragment 'nearer' to create tension.*
- *Frightening metaphor – 'froze' – and simile, 'quick as a knife'.*
- *Adverb 'Carefully' at start of sentence to highlight how she moved. Consider effect of moving it to the end.*
- *Choice of verbs to show how she feels – 'peered', 'clenched', 'racing'.*
- *Use of 'because', would 'as' have been more effective?*

Day 8

Events

She glanced around the classroom for another way out. The windows had not yet been locked! Trying to make as little noise as possible, she shoved one of the windows open and scrambled through.

A moment later she was out in the playground. It was quite dark where she was standing. She stood still and listened. Behind her the window opened further with a sudden squeak. Claire gasped. A hand came through the window and grasped the sill. Someone was pulling themselves up.

- *Short paragraphs to maintain pace.*
- *'Trying to make as little noise as possible, she shoved one of the windows open and scrambled through.' Consider rewording this complex sentence without using the non-finite clause at the beginning.*
- *Choice of verbs to create sense of urgency – 'glanced', 'shoved', 'scrambled'.*
- *Alliteration 'sudden squeak' to make event memorable.*
- *Short sentence for dramatic moment.*
- *Use of powerful verb 'grasped' and empty word – 'someone'.*
- *Leaves reader wondering who it is.*
- *'Hand' – on its own is visually frightening.*

Without thinking, Claire raised the pen and stabbed at the hand with all her might. The nib dug into the flesh and there was an almighty scream.

- *Brief paragraph for dramatic effect.*
- *Choice of verbs – 'stabbed', 'dug'.*
- *Try relocating the non-finite clause 'without thinking'.*

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RESOURCES

Day 10

Resolution and ending

Claire ran as fast as she could, straight across the playground, through the gate and back up the High Street with her coat tails flying behind her like a cloak. About five minutes later she reached home and thundered into the kitchen to find her Mum. Puffing and panting, Claire gasped out her story like a fish out of water, punctuating each word with another breath. At that moment the door burst open and Sadie dashed in, her hand bleeding!

- *Longer sentences to build up sense of journey, and rhythm of panting.*
- *Simile to help reader picture Claire running – echo of Dracula!*
- *Powerful verbs reveal how she feels – 'thundered', 'puffing', 'panting', 'gasped', 'punctuating'.*
- *Try relocating 'puffing and panting' within the sentence.*
- *Note Sadie is still 'dashing'!*
- *Surprise, or 'twist', element left till end of paragraph.*
- *Examine the last sentence – could it be more effective to make 'her hand bleeding' into a new sentence?*
- *Spelling – 'breath' – list other words ending in 'th' in which the /e/ phoneme is represented by 'ea' (e.g. 'death', 'stealth', 'health', 'wealth').*

"You two," tutted Mrs Brewster. "Dashing all over the place, never stopping to think!" She tugged the bandage on Sadie's hand tighter. "You were right to go back love, but trying to scare her was daft. Daft as a brickbat." She shook her head again, clicking her tongue against her teeth, as she eyed her eldest children. "I suppose this is what the fuss was all about," she finally said, opening a large cardboard box that had been on the kitchen floor. She hauled out a tiny puppy.

- *'Tutted' suggests homeliness of Mother – all is well now.*
- *Mother draws some sort of meaning from tale – too much 'dashing', silly pranks and not enough thinking!*
- *Detail of bandage and clicking tongue to add reality.*
- *Use of an expression to make Mother sound real.*
- *The reason for all the dashing – left to very last moment.*

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UNIT 2: Narrative writing

Week		Shared text and sentence level ***The Ivory Door* by Paul Biegel** ***Ghost Story* by Susan Cooper** (see page 16)	Guided reading/writing	Independent work	Plenary
1	Mon	Shared reading: analyse and annotate two examples/create checklist Opening – introducing characters	Guided reading (group 1) *The Owl Tree* – Jenny Nimmo	Working in pairs, analyse the openings of other short stories and extend the checklist	Children contribute to the class checklist of features of effective openings
	Tues	Shared writing – teacher demonstration using checklist Opening – introducing characters	Teacher-led guided writing (group 2)	Write independently, applying the checklist to write an opening	Children's work is evaluated against the checklist
	Wed	Shared reading: analyse and annotate two examples/create checklist Build-up – establishing setting	Guided reading (group 3) *Tom's Midnight Garden* – Philippa Pearce	Working in small groups, analyse build-ups and settings and extend the checklist	Contribute to the class checklist – build-ups
	Thur	Shared writing – teacher demonstration using checklist Build-up – establishing setting	Teacher-led guided writing (group 4)	Write independently, applying the checklist to build a story	Work evaluated against checklist
	Fri	Shared reading: analyse and annotate two examples/create checklist Dilemma	Guided reading (group 5) *The Firework-Maker's Daughter* – Philip Pullman	Working in pairs, analyse the dilemma and extend the checklist	Contribute to the class checklist – dilemma
2	Mon	Shared writing – teacher demonstration using checklist Dilemma	Teacher-led guided writing (group 1)	Write independently, applying the checklist to create a dilemma	Work evaluated against checklist
	Tues	Shared reading: analyse and annotate two examples/create checklist Reaction – events	Guided reading (group 2) *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* – Selina Hastings	Working individually, analyse reaction/events and extend the checklist	Contribute to the class checklist – reactions
	Wed	Shared writing – teacher demonstration using checklist Reaction – events	Teacher-led guided writing (group 3)	Write independently, applying the checklist to relate the events	Work evaluated against checklist
	Thur	Shared reading: analyse and annotate two examples/create checklist Resolution and ending	Guided reading (group 4) *Tom's Midnight Garden* – Philippa Pearce	Working in small groups, analyse resolutions/ends and extend the checklist	Contribute to the class checklist – resolutions
	Fri	Shared writing – teacher demonstration using checklist Resolution and ending	Teacher-led guided writing (group 5)	Write independently, applying the checklist to resolve/end a piece of writing	Work evaluated against checklist

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Unit 2: Narrative writing
Days 1 and 2 – Opening and introducing characters
Detailed lesson plan

Introduction

This is a step-by-step plan for the two-day teaching routine:

Day 1: Shared reading and analysis
Day 2: Shared writing

Although very detailed, these lesson plans cannot indicate the specific needs of every child. For instance, those with a sensory impairment might need support to access text, as might those who are learning English as a second language. (See NLS files: "Supporting pupils with special educational needs in the Literacy Hour" Module 3 Handouts 14 and 16: "Supporting pupils learning English as an additional language".)

This plan can be used in mixed-age classes as there are narrative objectives in Term 1 throughout Key Stage 2.

Day 1 – Shared reading

Tell the children that they will be writing a suspense story for the next two weeks. Briefly remind them of the five elements of a simple problem/resolution narrative – opening, build-up, dilemma, events, resolution – and tell them that you will be investigating good examples of each element, reading as writers, and then you will show them how to write each element before they have a go themselves.

1. Ask the children what types of opening they know (dialogue, question, setting, warning, dramatic, etc.) and what they know about writing good openings to stories. List some of the criteria they offer, e.g. draw the reader into the story quickly, begin to build up the main character, use an early hook to catch the reader's interest.
2. Put up enlarged text of a suspense narrative opening (e.g. *The Ivory Door* by Paul Biegel from *Fingers on the Back of My Neck* by Margaret Mahy and others, Puffin 1998).
3. Discuss the opening sentence or two and what it tells you, what it hints at, how it makes you feel, whether it makes you want to read on, etc. Refer back to the list of criteria for good openings and add to the list if necessary.
4. Repeat with another enlarged text (e.g. *Ghost Story* by Susan Cooper, from *Fingers on the Back of My Neck* by Margaret Mahy and others, Puffin 1998).
5. The criteria list for good openings which 'grab the reader' could include using dialogue, asking the reader a question, describing some strange behaviour of one of the characters, using a dramatic exclamation 'Help!', introducing something intriguing, etc. (see page 13).

6. Continue with this text and examine how the characters are introduced and how the author portrays character e.g. mainly through what the characters say and do, plus minimal description, viewed through the eyes of an onlooker. Create list of criteria for effective characterisation.
7. Now return to the first text and explore the characterisation in the same way. Add, as appropriate, to your criteria list.
8. The criteria list for good writing to introduce characters could include: using an interesting name, describing how the character feels, e.g. sad, lonely, angry or what they are, e.g. bossy, shy, etc.; using powerful verbs to show how a character feels; using dialogue to reflect character; giving the thoughts and reactions of other characters; revealing the characters' own thoughts and ideas (see page 13).

Independent work

Text analysis
Give the children two or more examples of openings to analyse in pairs in the same way that you were doing as a class in shared reading. Ask them to categorise the openings explaining the strategies the writer uses to show character and add any new points onto the criteria checklist.

Guided reading
Work with one group on focused/target reading objectives.

Plenary

Complete the list of criteria from any new points the children have decided from the independent activity. In pairs, ask the children to tell their partners of a type of opening they would like to try out in their next story and why they think it is effective. Take some of the ideas mentioned. Show the children the planning frame of a suspense story and talk it through. Ask them to be thinking up the skeleton of a story which they will be starting to write the next day about two children – friends or relatives.

Day 2 – Shared writing – demonstration

Show the children the planning frame of a suspense story. Tell them that you are going to write the beginning of a story for them today and complete it over the next two weeks. Tell them that you have a skeleton of the story worked out in your head but that you are not going to show them it because that would spoil it for them. Demonstrate how to write an opening and to introduce the characters. Explain what you are doing while you are doing it – or ask the children why they think you are doing it! Ask them to look at the checklist to see whether you are employing any of the techniques you collected there. (The *Grammar for Writing* video has a Year 6 teacher doing this – time code 1:16:11.) It is advisable to compose your paragraph(s) before the lesson. This allows you to incorporate features you want to highlight for teaching purposes such as connectives (objective S4, W6) and spelling strategies (objective W1-3). (See demonstration text on page 11.)

Tell the children that they will be starting off their own suspense story in independent time. Ask them to discuss with their partner some ideas for the story about two cousins or friends and then draw five boxes of the planning frame and write some very brief notes in each box.

Independent/guided work

Ask the children to choose one of the openings they thought was particularly effective and then write one or two paragraphs to establish the characters in the story. Remind them to refer to the criteria checklist for effective writing. Ask two or three children to write theirs on an overhead transparency so that it can be shown to the class in the plenary session. Before the end of the session, ask the children to share their work with their response partner.

Plenary

Discuss the paragraphs written on the transparencies. Ask the children to identify the features of effective writing. Identify appropriate use of connectives or lack of them. If appropriate, ask for suggestions for possibly improving the writing. Give the children the last few minutes to make any alterations to their work in the light of the discussion.

Word level work

Word level teaching and learning should be incorporated into the work on analysis of text (e.g. meaning and spelling of connectives, W6) and into shared, guided and independent writing. However, focused spelling, like mental maths, needs concentrated daily attention so that writing words correctly with a fluent hand is automatic and children's cognitive capacity is released to attend to the content and form of their writing. Ten minutes every day can be spent on sharpening up children's spelling knowledge (W2 and 3).

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Unit 2: Narrative writing
Transcript of Days 1 and 2
(taught by Year 6 teacher, Sam. – children's responses and contributions omitted)

Day 1 – Shared reading

Do you remember Leroy Davis? He's just started at Wencome. He was in my class last year and wrote this suspense story. I'll read the beginning . . . . . That's a pretty stunning opening. He's really hooked us in. We'll trace how he created this story; you remember the five sections [pointed to five-stage planning frame for narrative on wall]. Section 1 opening – captures the reader's interest. I'll read on. . . . . now we know who the story is about and everything seems to be going quite well so far – he's building the story up [pointed to section 2 on planning frame and then read on]. . . . . you knew something was bound to happen didn't you? Here we have the dilemma and then we have the events [pointed to sections 3 and 4 on planning frame and then read to the end] . . . . . That was an unexpected ending wasn't it? I'm going to show you how to write a story like that. Today and tomorrow we're going to look at how to write a good opening. You remember doing openings last year. What is the purpose of the opening of a story? . . . . . Yes, to grab the reader. How can we grab the reader? . . . . . Yes, [wrote on board *make a bizarre or provocative statement, ... speak directly to the reader*] . . . . . .

Good, look at this [switched on OHP of beginning of *The Ivory Door* by Paul Biegel.

"He can't help it." said the nurse. "It's because of that rattling thunderclap."
"Yes, that's what you always say."
"It's true! I was there. When he was born. . . . . ."]

What device has Paul Biegel used to open his story, *The Ivory Door*? . . . . . Yes, speech, dialogue. Discuss with your partner whether it makes you want to read on and if so, why? . . . . . Yes, it gets you right in to the story quickly. . . . . Good, they're describing someone else, so you want to know more. In fact they're gossiping about someone aren't they? . . . . . Yes, that's right, well done. We, the readers, are eavesdropping and that's bound to make us want to listen in! . . . . . And it's a bit bizarre, how can a thunderclap affect someone's birth? So we can add to our list – use dialogue, reader eavesdropping into gossip [wrote on board] – and we've already got 'bizarre statement' written down.

Now what about this opening? [switched on OHP of beginning of *Ghost Story* by Susan Cooper.

I'm writing this in longhand, on paper, in my notebook. It's the only way to be private, you know? A computer is no place for secrets – especially my computer. And boy, does this story have to be kept secret, unless I want to be locked up as a crazy person.
You'll see why.]

This is the opening of *Ghost Story* by Susan Cooper. What has she done here to get us in. Has she used any of the devices we've already mentioned? Take a few moments to discuss it with your partner. . . . . Yes, she addresses the reader directly as 'you' – very powerful and of course this is easy because she is writing in the first person – "I'm writing this". What else? . . . . . puts suspense into the opening, yes she certainly does; which words or phrases particularly? . . . . . yes,

and 'secret' is even repeated. . . . . crazy person – yes, that opens up all sorts of possibilities and of course, the title *Ghost Story* – do we think of people who believe in ghosts as crazy?

Here are the next four paragraphs [switched on OHT

My name's Toby. Toby Waller. I don't have any brothers or sisters, but I have two hyperactive parents, Paul and Ethel Waller. I also have a hyperactive puppy called Seven, which is short for Heinz Fifty-Seven Varieties; we got him as a stray and he's a weird-looking mixture, but cheerful.

My dad's a lawyer. He practises family law, which he says means trying to keep people together, though it seems to me he mostly helps them to get divorced.

My mom's a psychotherapist, ...

I grew up in New York too, till last year. We had this really cool apartment on the East Side, and I could walk to school and play softball in the park, and when there were parades on Fifth Avenue you could hear the music of the bands bouncing along in the street. . . . . .]

My name's Toby. Ah, the story is not being told by Susan Cooper although it's in the first person. Toby tells you a little about himself and his family in these two paragraphs but what else can you deduce about Toby? In pairs, on your whiteboards, write down three things you can work out about Toby himself that isn't specifically told in the text . . . . . Right. Now join with another pair and discuss what you have written. Can you see if you can agree on at least two things? . . . . . Let's hear what you have agreed on. Yes, Toby probably lives alone with his parents, certainly he doesn't have brothers and sisters and there is no hint of anyone else. The puppy seems to be the only other occupant. . . . . They moved house since the previous year. . . . . Yes, he was obviously very happy in his previous house wasn't he? It may well be that he is unhappy in his present house. . . . . He's school age – any closer than that? . . . . . You'd say between 8 and 14. Why's that? . . . . . Yes, he writes on a computer and uses big words . . . . . Yes, he says 'when I was little'. . . . . His sense of humour. Carry on, explain what you mean. . . . . The way he makes a joke about his parents and divorce, you think he must be around your age or older. Well done, we are beginning to get an idea about Toby's character and feelings.

Who'd like to put into words how an author can tell the reader about someone's character? We'll make another list on the board . . . . . Yes, the author can just tell us – "he was a miserly recluse" – and as we have discussed before, that can be quite boring after a while. . . . . Yes, when people speak they give away quite a lot about themselves and others – dialogue . . . . . the style of writing, yes, particularly when it is in first person, it's a real give away like this one. Let's leave it for now and go back to *The Ivory Door* and see whether we can find more out about the person that the two people were discussing in the opening. [Read from the opening dialogue and the paragraph describing the prince, ending at 'And that was allowed, for she was so fond of her gracious child']

Well, he's not a timid boy. The author uses an adjective, timid, to describe what he isn't. Apart from 'gracious', which is what his nanny calls him, what other adjectives are used to describe him . . . . . that's right – none. So what devices does the author use to describe him? . . . . . Yes, he's a daredevil, that whole

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paragraph describes what he does . . . . . Yes, there's a simile in there: like a black beetle. So what can we add to the list about good character writing? We've got 'tell them', dialogue, writing style so far; . . . . . Good, thank you, I'll summarise that with the word 'actions'. . . . . yes, telling us what he isn't, I'll write 'telling opposite' . . . . . and yes, stylistic devices such as simile and metaphor. [Wrote on the board]

Now while I work with a group I want you to look at the openings of the stories I have put on your tables. See if you can find any more points to add either to our list on openings or this list we've just been making on portraying character. Work in pairs. I'll alert you five minutes before the end of the time so that you can share your ideas with the rest of your table.

Plenary

Think for a minute of an opening you would like to use in your next suspense story. . . . . Now you are going to tell your partners and explain why you think it would be effective; then your partners are going to tell the class what you said. Partner Bs go first this time. . . . . .

Now, let's take a last look at our two lists. Have you anything to add, first of all, to the criteria for effective openings? . . . . . No, I think that is slightly different. What you're saying is that the opening gets right into the story. I agree that you could say *The Ivory Door* did that but we didn't make quite that point; we were more concerned with the fact it was dialogue, weren't we? . . . . . Yes, you looked at a story with a flashback. Now, anything to add to the other list – character? . . . . . .

Tomorrow, you are going to begin a suspense story about two children, friends or relatives, one of them has come to stay for a couple of nights with the other. Tonight, I want you to be thinking about the story-line and to write a few notes in the five boxes of your narrative planning frame.

Day 2 – Shared writing

Yesterday we looked at story openings and introducing the characters. We discussed effective writing and made a list to think about when you write your openings and first couple of paragraphs about the characters. At home you were thinking about a suspense story you would like to write about two cousins. Later on, you can get these stories started. I've done the same. I've got a story plan which, on this occasion, I am not going to share with you because I want to keep you guessing about what is going to happen.

As I write the opening I want you to notice whether I have used any of the ideas we discussed yesterday. [Wrote on OHT *Claire grinned at her twin sister, Sadie.*] What have I done here? . . . . . Yes, I've gone straight in – no messing. In that one first sentence you already know about two of the characters, their relationship. Are you interested to know more? . . . . . Why? . . . . . Yes I wonder why Claire grinned – you are beginning to be hooked in. Check the criteria list we made yesterday. Straight in to the story and the reader is left 'wondering why' after the very first sentence. Incidentally, why double 'n' in grinned? . . . . . well done, short vowel /i/. 'It was almost the end of the last lesson of the day.' Yes, I like that, it builds up: 'almost – end – last'. Maybe Claire was desperate to get out of school today. [Wrote on board *It was almost*] Notice 'almost' is all one word but with

only one 'l' like 'also' and 'altogether'. [Wrote *the end of the last lesson of the day.*] 'Outside, the wind whipped leaves and crisp packets across the playground.' [Wrote *Outside, the wind*] Bev could you spell 'whipped' for me? [Wrote *whiped* to Bev's dictation and then *ripe* and *ripped* on the board]. . . . . OK, Bev, thanks, double 'p' in 'whipped' – do you see why? [Wrote *leaves and crisp packets across the playground.*] I could change it round. 'The wind whipped leaves and crisp packets across the playground outside.' I don't suppose I need 'outside' since it's obvious the playground is outside. But actually, 'outside' is a connecting word here. It is following Claire's thoughts out of the classroom into the playground so we need the linking word – 'outside' there. We'll go on now to describe what Claire knows is going on outside even though she can't necessarily see it. [Wrote *A gaggle of mums and dads gathered at the school gate.*] . . . . . alliteration? Well done, I hadn't noticed that! When I say it aloud, I can also hear a semi-rhyming going on – parents babble and blathering! Now we'll send the children out there. But first we need to get the reader's eye back inside the classroom, so we'll use another preposition as a connecting word again. Inside. [Wrote *Inside, the lesson drew to a close. Mrs Sondhi sent the class out one by one.*]

Now, let's read it through. Does it set the scene well and make us want to read on . . . . . ?

Now we need to let the reader know a bit more about these two girls – I need to build up their characters. 'Sadie was an impetuous girl, Claire was more careful.' No, that slows the plot down. The reader wants to know whether Claire was smiling because of something they were going to do after school. I can drop information about the girls' characters in as I get on with the story. [Wrote *The two girls rushed across the playground and up the High Street. They could hardly wait to get back home.*] Yes, that moves it on a bit. Now something about Claire as she's running. What about 'Claire marched on, almost running, only stopping to tug up her ankle socks'? Yes, that gives the impression of a deliberate sort of person. Bev, I'm going to ask you to spell 'stopping' and Ryan, I'm going to ask you to spell 'running' when we get there! [Wrote *Claire marched on, almost running, only stopping to tug up her ankle socks* with the help of Bev and Ryan.] Now for Sadie. [Wrote *Sadie laughed*]. Short sentence, breaks the flow up a bit; now let's get her character through with something she says. What about "Don't waste time with that!" she shouted? Yes, she's not worried about her appearance; she just wants to get there. [Wrote *"Don't waste time with that!" she shouted and dashed on.*] OK let's read that so far. [Read through from the beginning.] Does it hang together?

Right, nearly home. [Wrote *By the chip shop they turned up Filcher's alley to take the short cut to the estate.*] Now we'll play a trick on the reader – we'll suspend the getting home – we'll take a detour in the plot. Claire's forgotten something and of course she's too meticulous to allow herself to leave it at school. But, we'll not say what it is – leave the reader guessing again. [*Wrote "Oh no," Claire groaned, rummaging in her bag. "I've left it behind! I'll have to go back. Tell Mum I might be late. See you later!" she yelled down the alley.*] Mm, I think we need a touch of foreboding here, just a couple of hints. I think I'll put in 'dark' alley. Of course impulsive Sadie has raced away; she can't hear. So we'll add to that foreboding by starting the next sentence with 'But' [Wrote *But there was no reply. Sadie had raced on.]* Now read through both paragraphs. . . . . .

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Objectives

Text

7. to plan quickly and effectively the plot, characters and structure of their own narrative writing;

Sentence

4. to investigate connecting words and phrases:
- collect examples from reading and thesauruses;
- study how points are typically connected in different kinds of text;
- classify useful examples for different kinds of text – for example, by position (*besides, nearby, by*); sequence (*firstly, secondly ...*); logic (*therefore, so, consequently*);
- identify connectives which have multiple purposes (e.g. *on, under, besides*).

Word

1. to identify mis-spelt words in own writing; to keep individual lists (e.g. spelling logs); to learn to spell them;
2. to use known spellings as a basis for spelling other words with similar patterns or related meanings;
3. to use independent spelling strategies, including:
- building up spelling by syllabic parts, using known prefixes, suffixes and common letter strings;
- applying knowledge of spelling rules and exceptions;
- building words from other known words, and from awareness of the meaning or derivations of words;
- using dictionaries and IT spell-checks;
- using visual skills, e.g. recognising common letter strings and checking critical features (i.e. does it look right, shape, length, etc.);
6. to investigate meanings and spellings of connectives: *therefore, notwithstanding, furthermore*, etc.; link to sentence level work on connectives.

Outcome – *Warning story*

Typical planning frame for a warning story

Opening	**Build-up**	**Dilemma**	**Events**	**Resolution and ending**
Warning not to do something e.g. do not play by the canal. Begin establishing characters.	Establish the setting. Characters start to do something – and get tempted, e.g. they make their way to the canal.	Do the thing they have been warned not to do, e.g. play by the canal.	Struggle to save themselves from the anticipated consequence, e.g. one falls in.	Succeed in getting away, surviving, e.g. friend drags the other one out. Final comment probably from the person who gave the initial warning, e.g. Mum who finds them soaking wet.

Teach this fortnight in exactly the same order as Unit 2 on suspense story but instead of using demonstration writing in Shared writing, use the technique of **teacher as scribe**, encouraging pupils to contribute sentences, referring back to the models and checklists, thinking about using connectives and paragraphing each scene.

Unit 5: Narrative writing – week 3

Objectives

Text

7. to plan quickly and effectively the plot, characters and structure of their own narrative writing.

Sentence

1. to revise from Y5:
- re-expressing sentences in a different order;

4. to investigate connecting words and phrases:
- collect examples from reading and thesauruses;
- study how points are typically connected in different kinds of text;
- classify useful examples for different kinds of text – for example, by position (*besides, nearby, by*); sequence (*firstly, secondly...*); logic (*therefore, so, consequently*);
- identify connectives which have multiple purposes (e.g. *on, under, besides*);

5. to form complex sentences through, e.g.:
- using different connecting devices;
- reading back complex sentences for clarity of meaning, and adjusting as necessary;
- evaluating which links work best;
- exploring how meaning is affected by the sequence and structure of clauses.

Outcome – *Looking for something* – a quest adventure story

Typical planning frame for an adventure story

Opening Task established – to find something.	**Build-up** Establish setting. Characters set off and overcome obstacles *en route*.	**Dilemma** Options: ■ can't find it ■ can't get in ■ get trapped ■ get chased	**Events** Struggle and overcome each problem.	**Resolution and ending** Arrive back at start – task accomplished. Final comment.

There is only one week for this story. Use the shared writing time briefly to revise connectives, using paragraphs to capture each scene, arranging the order of the words and phrases in the sentence to gain maximum effect and using stylistic devices. Ask the children to write in pairs on white boards in **supported composition**.

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